JUNE 1958

Price 1/6

Ballet TODAY

MARYON LANE'S CAREER

Ballet TODAY

Established 1946

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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Subscription Rate: for 10 *issues per year: Inland and Overseas* 17/6*d. per annum. Single copies* 1/6*d. monthly, post* 4*d. extra.*

Remittances from abroad must be payable in England.

SOLE AGENTS:
Australasia: Gordon & Gotch Ltd.;
South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.;
Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Kingstons Ltd.;
U.S.A.: Globe Newsdealers Distributing Co., 150 Lafayette Street, New York 13, N.Y.

BALLET TODAY is published each month with the exception of two combined issues a year. The publication date of combined issues is always announced well in advance.

Our next issue will be published on 2nd July, 1958.

Printed by Richard Madley Ltd., 54 Grafton Way, W.1, England.

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Maryon Lane in Birthday Offering (*a new and hitherto unpublished photograph taken, during the Company's recent American tour, by* **Zachary Freyman**)

NEXT MONTH'S SPECIAL FEATURES

Anita Landa in our *Careers in Pictures* feature. Photographs of Anita and John Gilpin in *The Witch Boy*, Jeffrey Kovel in our *Men in Ballet* series, and many other photographs and articles.

Above: After the show, in the dressing room at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre, Paris. Charles Chaplin in the centre talking to (right) John Gilpin and (left) Anton Dolin.

Right: A section of the audience applauding Festival Ballet.

Photos: Pic, Paris

BACKSTAGE

FIRST NIGHT

I had been invited to Festival Ballet's opening night at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre in Paris, and with members of the British press met Dr. and Mrs. Braunsweg at our hotel at five o'clock. They had been at rehearsal from ten o'clock in the morning.

"They are wonderful youngsters," Mrs. Braunsweg told me over a cup of tea, and as she nervously stubbed out one cigarette after another I realised fully, perhaps for the first time, just what it means to present a Company in a country other than one's own.

Should critics be unkind to them at home each Company has its own followers, and probably, in the long run, criticism good or bad makes very little difference, but each time you take a Company abroad you stand or fall upon the *present* performance.

Two or three days before he left for Paris Dr. Braunsweg sat and talked to me in his London flat. He was brimming over with enthusiasm about the presentation of the *Witch Boy*, the Company's new ballet which Paris would see for the first time on the opening night. But here in Paris after a long day of rehearsals, he too was nervous and strung up.

The show began at nine o'clock and as we crammed into the little boxes at the theatre, surely intended for two people but now accommodating four, and watched the audience arrive, something of this nervous tension began to communicate itself to me. This was *our* Company, they had worked so hard all day, surely they must be tired before they started? I hoped they would do well.

Every seat was taken, fourteen ambassadors and their ladies, many famous people of stage and screen, in fact all "first night" Paris was there.

The applause after each item was heartening, and we began to relax and enjoy the show. Afterwards we had been asked to join members of the French Press backstage to meet the dancers, but when we arrived in the Sarah Bernhardt dressing room pandemonium had broken loose.

As the jam of people carried me forward through the door I saw Serge Lifar battling to get out. In the centre of the room one could see Charlie Chaplin with his wife, Oona, surrounded by pressmen, the target of several photographers who, unable to get into the mass of people, jumped on couches to give them a better vantage point.

At first I couldn't see any dancers present, but as part of the crowd opened Krassovska was revealed, then Anton Dolin. A lady with a shy little girl in tow advanced on Dolin to present an orange, peeled, and wrapped in cellophane (is he an addict?). Then someone tried to clear a path to bring John Gilpin in, a young lady rushed at him and kissed him. I did not catch a glimpse of him after that. When the crowd began to thin out a little I saw Alicia Markova (it is always difficult to see Markova in a crowd, she is so tiny) and she looked as cool and elegant as always, despite the frightful heat in the dressing-room.

Alicia had danced in *Les Sylphides* that night, and I think it was her spiritual, almost healing quality on stage which helped to quell my own first night nerves.

"Did I *imagine* there was something 'special' in her performance this evening?" I asked her sister, Doris Barry. "Well," said Doris, "this theatre has many memories for Markova, she danced here twenty-five years ago, as a baby ballerina with Diaghilev."

Mr. Chaplin and his wife said their goodbyes. "I am looking forward to seeing the children" said Anton Dolin. "Yes" said Charlie with a quirk of the famous eyebrows "I'll get them to dance for you."

It had been a wonderful evening, but we were quite pleased to get out into the cool night air. As we bowled back to our hotel in the taxi one of the newspaper men told us a story of his visit to a show where Liberace had been present. A Fleet Street photographer had asked him "Is that Liberace's Mom standing next to him?" "Darn it," he told us, "I didn't think to say 'yes,' if I had the Dowager Countess of . . . would have appeared in his paper the next day captioned Liberace and Mom."

CULTURAL FESTIVAL IN TURKEY

Leading personalities in the arts in Britain visited Ankara during their Spring cultural festival from May 5th to 26th. Dame Ninette de Valois lectured on ballet and visited the Turkish Ballet Conservatoire (which she founded ten years ago at the Government's request), and Istanbul. Dame Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes danced with the Turkish National Ballet—the Company which evolved from the Conservatoire.

DAME MARGOT'S ENGAGEMENTS

It is a source of continual amazement to me that Dame Margot Fonteyn can fill so many engagements. The mangement at Covent Garden do not notify us of all her flying visits, but in addition to the above she is dancing at the Brussels Exhibition in May and June, appeared in BBC's television programme *Music for You*, where she danced Odette, on the 18th May, and when I visited Monte Carlo for Easter she was dancing there. All this in addition to her regular performances at the Royal Opera House and her many social engagements would seem to exhaust anyone, but she remains completely unruffled. I was deeply impressed by her manner at rehearsal in Monte Carlo. She came on the stage with cool businesslike efficiency, ran through *La Peri*, thanked the orchestra and departed. A member of the orchestra sat talking to me, and as Dame Margot left he remarked "there goes one who never makes a *fuss*."

LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

Since it was built in 1732 *by John Rich, the theatre in London's fruit and vegetable market—Covent Garden—has twice been destroyed by fire. Our picture shows the total destruction of the Theatre Royal at a Bal Masque on Wednesday, 5th March,* 1856. *The present Royal Opera House was opened on the evening of* 15*th May,* 1858, *and therefore achieves its centenary this year. This will be celebrated on June* 10*th with a Gala Performance to be given by the Covent Garden Opera Company in the presence of H.M. Queen Elizabeth and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh. The illustration is from the Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

LE LAC DES CYGNES

AT a Saturday matinée at Covent Garden the stalls had an unusual appearance: the whole of the back half was filled with excited children, R.A.D. pupils being given an opportunity to see Margot Fonteyn (President of the Royal Academy of Dancing) in one of her finest rôles. It was clear that the children appreciated to the full how lucky they were: when Margot Fonteyn came out to take a call at the end of the performance they greeted her with a sudden high-pitched shout of enthusiasm which was entrancing to hear.

But the cheers of the gallery were even louder and more prolonged; for this performance of *Lac* was given almost unbearable poignancy by press-reports of the return to Panama of Margot Fonteyn's husband (Roberto de Arias) with ambiguous statements suggesting that this might affect Margot Fonteyn's career as a dancer. When she made her exit at the end of Act II, rippling on her points to suggest the glide of a swan and shaking her head with an infinitely lyrical sadness, one could feel an almost painful wave of emotion reaching up to her across the footlights. It was as if the spectators were receiving a foretaste of Margot Fonteyn's departure to Panama . . . For myself, I hope that Margot Fonteyn will follow the example of Ulanova and cut down the frequency of her performances rather than retire suddenly. For over twenty years Margot Fonteyn has been the chief box-office attraction of the company; it is only right that she should take things more easily now. But she is still developing very fast artistically, and can contribute to the future development of ballet in England something which no-one else can provide.

Her creative powers were very clearly to be seen in this magnificent performance of Odette-Odile. None can phrase Odette's first solo like her; it is sheer joy to see her sending her arm up in a perfectly smooth arc while her foot darts out and returns in a *rond de jambe*, and stealing time on the *sissones* to make the unfolding of the *developpé* more gloriously sustained.

Her performance as Odile in Act III was no less overwhelming. I cannot agree with James Monahan when he writes in his biography of Margot Fonteyn that " Talent and application have made her an Odile; but nature made her an Odette." Nature gave her very strong dramatic abilities *as well as* great lyricism, and whenever she has been given a dramatic rôle to interpret she has revelled in the opportunity; in fact she was catching the imagination of the public in 1937 with the dramatic intensity of her dancing and acting in the mad scene of *Giselle* before her technique was strong enough for her lyricism to flower completely . . . To give one other example out of many: it was not just hard work which made Margot Fonteyn's interpretation of the rôle of the woman-Tiresias so sensual and dynamic.

LES SYLPHIDES

There were years—I might almost say decades—during which I could not abide to see *Les Sylphides* performed by the company known successively as Vic-Wells, Sadler's Wells and Royal. This ballet exposed with cruel precision a certain lack in the training of the dancers of lyricism and poetic arm-movements associated with the Russian school, and the anonymous production reproduced only the dry bones of the choreography, giving the dancers no chance to come to terms with Fokine's highly personal style. But things have been different since Grigoriev and Tchernicheva produced this ballet at Covent Garden two years ago. There were evenings when the ballet was dragged almost to a halt by incompetent conductors with a poor sense of tempo, and nearly always there were one or two soloists whose brittle style was quite unsuited to the choreography; but always one could imagine Fokine's sublime choreography behind the accidents of interpretation. The fact is that English dancers are in general very well suited to *Les Sylphides:* when properly trained they are exceptionally musical, and they are as much at home in mysterious romanticism as German dancers are in expressionist violence. If ever there arrives a production of *Les Sylphides* as perfect as the original one produced by Fokine with the collaboration of Pavlova, Karsavina and Nijinsky, this is just as likely to take place in England as in Russia, Poland or Yugoslavia.

In the meantime we must be grateful for the flawed beauty of the Royal Ballet's production. Margot Fonteyn has now completely mastered Fokine's style (with its very subtle nuances of rhythm and phrasing) and makes her own interpretation as individual and apparently spontaneous as any of her other creations. The Mazurka was originally intended for a dancer with high elevation, and since this is one of the very few aspects of technique in which Margot Fonteyn is deficient, the Mazurka presents her with grave problems of timing and interpretation. Being a supreme artist, she tackles these problems with such imagination that she makes her deficiency seem an advantage: at each grand jete she skims over the ground with a darting movement, lifting her trailing foot as her body descends, shooting out her front foot, and stretching her arms so that she seems to float in a curve of her own devising, quite different from (and much more beautiful than) the familiar catenary curve taken by bodies subject to Newton's laws . . . All the same, I wish she would follow the precedent set by Pavlova and dance the Prelude: this solo can quite well be combined with the pas de deux (if the order of the other solos is changed) and—being one of the most poetic dances ever arranged—it offers a splendid challenge to the interpretative powers of a ballerina in her creative prime.

Her interpretation of the pas de deux seems to grow in richness each time she dances in this ballet. She makes the pas de deux a dialogue of two lovers, inclining her head tenderly to kiss her beloved, and rushing back eagerly to his arms after a momentary separation. (This is exactly as Fokine intended the dance: he distinguished very sharply between the moods of each solo.) With Robert Irving conducting, she sometimes slows up the dance momentarily to give added poignancy to the faster passages—such as the delicious run on point in first position, to which she gives the fragile, flickering quality of moonlight reflected from rippling water.

Three other Royal Ballet dancers—Julia Farron, Rosemary Lindsay and Svetlana Beriosova—give exemplary performances in *Les Sylphides*. Though their achievements are naturally of a different order from those of our *prima ballerina assoluta* all three are musical, understand the style and changing moods of the ballet, and never fail to give of their best. The same is not true, unfortunately, of the corps de ballet: with the inevitable changes of cast the style originally implanted by Grigoriev and Tchernicheva is showing a tendency to fade away, and arm movements are tending to merge into a drab, mechanical style which makes nonsense of the choreography. It is hard to understand why this should happen, when four soloists maintain the pure Fokine tradition: I should like to see what could be achieved if one of them took a few rehearsals of the corps de ballet.

BERIOSOVA'S GISELLE

It was a fascinating experience to see Beriosova's *Giselle* again: for this is easily her finest rôle. By temperament and physique she is so perfectly adapted to the Giselle of Act II that here she achieved something near perfection from the start, without apparent effort: born to dance this rôle, she suffered only from a tendency to make *all* her rôles rather too close to Perrot's mysterious Wili. In Act I Beriosova was originally hampered by the fact that her dramatic abilities were slow in maturing; but her interpretation has gained enormously in individuality and emotional variety in the last year, and now it is entirely delightful to watch the curve of emotional development throughout the Act. At first her Giselle is extremely shy—corresponding almost exactly to the Indian ideal heroine, Sita or Sakuntala; then it grows rapidly in warmth and assurance up to a climax in Giselle's big solo, just before Hilarion returns to destroy her happiness; finally comes a most pathetic mad scene, in which her erratic and ungovernable violence contrasts effectively with her shyness of the opening of the ballet . . . The whole of Beriosova's Giselle is now so polished and touching that it makes one regret more than ever her persistent failure to perfect her eye make-up: instead of making her eyes large and brilliant, she almost succeeds in hiding them completely.

HELPMANN'S BALLETS

A high proportion of the ballet audience made their first contact with Helpmann's two major ballets (*Hamlet* and *Miracle in the Gorbals*) when they were revived during the current season. Both made a strong impression—partly because of their intrinsic qualities, and partly because they brought some refreshing contrasts into the repertoire. They have worn well, in spite of some major flaws in casting: though the defects are as prominent as ever, so are the good things—notably Helpmann's assured and effective theatre-craft, and the decors and costumes (by Leslie Hurry and Edward Rubbra) which have a really contemporary bite which is lacking in most of the ballets of the repertoire.

Hamlet has a splendid and original theme, devised by Helpmann himself: he shows the events of Shakespeare's play as they might appear in a dream of the dead (or dying) Hamlet, making intelligent use of psychoanalytical theories about the play and subjecting the events and characters to the telescoping and confusion of identities normal in dreams. Unfortunately the style of choreography adopted by Helpmann—almost pure mime, with only a few decorative trimmings of dance—is not suited to his ambitious theme, which demands the full resources of expressive dancing as well as mime. Helpmann acts the central rôle of Hamlet better than ever before, with really masterly stage-presence and intensity. Anya Linden tackles the rôle of Ophelia with considerable verve, and makes a strong impact in Ophelia's mad dance; but her characterisation is wrong—much too brittle and mannered, with little of the poignancy that Margot Fonteyn brought to this rôle. Anya Linden has unfortunately discovered a certain number of tricks (such as quick, bird-like nods of the head and flicks of the wrist) which never fail to make an immediate effect, but are no substitute for real study of rôles.

Miracle in the Gorbals, arranged by Helpmann in 1944 (two years after *Hamlet*) shows a much better balance between mime and dancing; but it suffers from a melodramatic story, put together by Michael Benthall from a variety of sources without much understanding of the nature of choreography. The Official becomes intolerably "ham" after his first encounter with The Stranger, and the ending is much too abrupt, with the symbolism left hanging in mid-air as The Prostitute and The Suicide hurry off after a brief look at the body of The Stranger.

Helpmann has produced his dance-drama with great care, and the company as a whole responds extremely well to the demands he makes of them: the beggars, street-boys, teen-age girls and old harridans are all full of life and individuality. Julia Farron is outstanding as The Prostitute: she is even more cynically alluring than ten years ago, for she has matured considerably in the meantime. Annette Page, unfortunately, does not seem able to get into the skin of The Suicide, though Helpmann's choreography for this part is perhaps the best thing he has ever done: Pauline Clayden gave this rôle a touching simplicity and innocence which illuminated every scene in which she appeared, and the ballet suffers a good deal from the absence of her contribution. In the same way Brenda Taylor lacks the radiance which Moira Shearer brought to the rôle of The Lover. In either of these rôles Beriosova should be ideal, and it is to be hoped that one day she will be given a chance to tackle one or other of them.

Like nearly all ballets *Hamlet* and *Miracle in the Gorbals* have flaws. But they represent valuable additions to the repertoire—both from the point of view of the audience and from that of the company—and it would be a great pity if they are dropped when Helpmann moves on to take up other engagements.

PETRUSHKA

Petrushka is the Hamlet of ballet: this rôle was the supreme creation of Stravinsky, Fokine and Nijinsky, three of the greatest artists ever to work in the field of ballet. Into the symbolic figure of the puppet these men infused a whole world of suffering, despair, jealousy, unrequited love, longing for liberty and hatred of oppression. Massine, who took over the rôle after Nijinsky left Diaghilev, was unable to bring out all the tragedy and pathos of the original, but he is a very fine artist and danced with high intelligence and perfect respect for the detail and spirit of Fokine's choreography. Woizikowsky was also faithful to Fokine; and another Pole, Shabelevsky, danced the rôle in the thirties with such intensity and imaginative vitality that he made it into the very core of balletic genius at this period—as it was in Nijinsky's heyday.

The Royal Ballet made it impossible for its revival of *Petrushka* to achieve its proper impact by casting in the title rôle Alexander Grant, a character dancer with none of the qualities essential for this Hamlet-rôle (which in fact demands a touch of genius as well as great dramatic ability). Nevertheless Grant, a sincere artist, preserved the detail of the choreography with admirable fidelity. This left the way clear for Helpmann to give the performance of his lifetime: for his splendid achievement as The Rake and in many other dramatic rôles proved that he had a great many of the qualities needed to bring Petrushka to life.

Unfortunately he met this great challenge in the wrong way: instead of seeking with all his power to lose himself in Fokine's *Petrushka*, he took the easy path of changing the rôle to suit himself. His Petrushka was highly original, but a poor thing compared with the original. For example, he made the limbs look soft all the time: this conveyed very clearly that they were stuffed with sawdust—but in this way we lost all the tremendous vitality of Petrushka (who struggles so desperately to be a human being and escape from his prison that even after his murder his soul returns to mock the Magician.) In the same way Helpmann slowed up the chase through the Blackamoor's cell to such an extent that it looked like a film in slow-motion: this was undeniably effective, but all tension was lost at a time when the ballet should begin to build to the climax. Helpmann's make-up—which made him look almost senile—was exactly in harmony with his conception of the rôle, but robbed the rôle of any tragedy it might otherwise have possessed. His gravest mistake, however, was to change the ending, which was always the supreme climax of the ballet. Petrushka throws out his great shriek of defiance, and then falls to swing limply, once again a figure of straw: Helpmann dropped down to a hunched position which he held until the fall of the curtain, expressing nothing whatever.

It must also be said that at times he gave full meaning to details which meant little in Grant's performance, such as Petrushka's miming of his hatred of the Magician for kicking him. Here was Helpmann the great actor-dancer. But even these vivid moments were oddly disturbing, for they broke out of the texture of the ballet: it was almost as if Helpmann was talking, rather than Petrushka. Nevertheless he performed them so well as to suggest that he could give a great performance of the whole rôle, if he is prepared to tackle Fokines' choreography with the humility this creation of genius demands.

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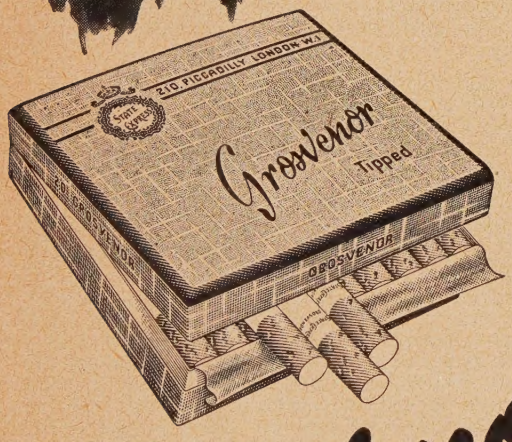

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4TH APRIL—B.B.C. TELEVISION **STARS OF THE BALLET**

Kirsten Simone and Henning Kronstam of the Royal Danish Ballet were the stars in this programme which was introduced and commented on by Miss Peggy van Praagh. The programme opened with excerpts from the Bournonville ballet *La Sylphide* which is over 100 years old. The problem of taking close ups in order to allow television audiences to see facial expression during mime scenes has yet to be solved by producers, as the whole body is often used to express emotions and by cutting it in half something is lost. Kirsten Simone danced the rôle of the Sylphide with all the grace and lightness typical of the Royal Danish School. As James, Henning Kronstam displayed his beautiful technique and style, also typical of the Danish School, in that it is slower and wonderfully controlled, giving the impression of breadth and ease. There followed an informal interview between the dancers and Miss van Praagh, in which she questioned them about their training in the Royal Danish Company. The programme ended with the pas de deux from *Casse-Noisette*. This version (arranged by Erik Bruhn) was not nearly as exciting and beautiful as Madame Karsavina's, recently danced by Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes at a Gala performance at the Royal Opera House. The Danish dancers, particularly Kirsten Simone, were not as impressive in this as in *La Sylphide* although they danced admirably. Production was by Naomi Capon.

6TH APRIL—B.B.C. TELEVISION **LES SYLPHIDES**

Nadia Nerina, Philip Chatfield, Rowena Jackson and Julia Farron were the soloists in this charming and unusual production by Margaret Dale. Set in a woodland glade, the soloists made their exits and entrances down leafy paths, were discovered gazing into a lily pool, or seemed to float down from a cloudy sky. The mottled floor effect was only a partial success as it sometimes detracted and blurred the dancers feet. The dancing was of a high standard, except that I cannot approve of the timing in the Waltz (danced by Rowena Jackson). Just why this solo should always appear out of time (even at Covent Garden) I have not yet been able to fathom, unless it could be that the protagonists are always unmusical. However, this programme was a great step forward in television ballet. The adaptation was excellent, camera angles were varied and unusual and altogether it was a highly polished production.

HELEN ROSS

CORK BALLET FESTIVAL

From the point of view of progressive Ballet history, the Cork Ballet Company, which opened its Festival in connection with the An Tostal celebrations at Cork City Hall on May 11th, is something quite unique.

Essentially this annual ballet offering in Cork City might be regarded as the term-end summit of a year's school work. But what a School! Truly, London-trained Joan Denise Moriarty, its director, deserves to rank with pioneers like her countrywoman, Ninette de Valois, with Lilian Baylis, Miss Horniman, Sir Barry Jackson and a few others, whose idealism have started new movements and whose names will go down to posterity as landmarks in their country's culture.

For this production of the *Sleeping Princess*, laced with international stars like Domini Callaghan, Michel de Lutry (who directed it, as well as dancing the leading male role) and a few other competent imported artists, was not only the company's most ambitious venture to date, but must have served as a tonic to the students taking part, their status increasing enormously by their own augmented confidence and inspiration.

Much, of course, depended upon the skilful contribution of the Cork Symphony Orchestra under Dr. Aloys Fleischmann's sympathetic conducting. After a somewhat uncertain start, it yielded to the brilliant leadership of violinist Dorothy Foley and gave a smooth, exhilarating performance. The Covent Garden score—with a few additions—was used. The outstanding feature of the whole production was its quick-moving coherence and professional finish. Extremely simple but effective settings were also an important ingredient. These were designed by Marshall Hutson, whose wife was responsible for the 300-odd costumes, all of them colourful and—with the sole exception of King Florestan's—highly decorative. Scenic changes were accomplished with a minimum of effort, and Mr. Leslie Horne's lighting effects were absolutely first class.

Domini Callaghan danced the part of Aurora with musicianly precision. It was an altogether finished performance and a fine lesson for the local girls who had the privilege of dancing with her. Mr. de Lutry's partnering was in every sense dynamic—here is an artist who has moved with the times and comes very near to the Bolshoi approach. Among the guest artists young Terry Westmoreland from Sadler's Wells School proved to be a beginner well worth watching. The outstanding local performer was Hilda Buckley who, both as Carabosse and Puss-in-Boots, showed real magnetism. Another graceful dancer of character was Theresa McDonnell. On the whole, the girl dancers should pay more attention to epaulement and general deportment—they are best in peasant dances at present. The men need polish.

ELISABETHE CORATHIEL.

Scenes from two of Helpmann's ballets

Miracle in the Gorbals *Hamlet* *Photos:* Dominic

MEN IN BALLET

ROBERT HELPMANN

By SONIA ROBERTS

TO try to pin down the essential qualities of Robert Helpmann in the course of a short article is impossible. His encyclopaedic embrace of the theatre, involving chameleon-like changes of media, allow him to discuss without absurdity the prospect of directing Shakespeare one minute, and an ice show the next.

However, in the ballet field, there is a tendency to regard him in the light of a master builder, as one of the central figures in the greater drama of "Building a British Ballet" rather than as the mere creator of a character or performer of steps in any particular given ballet.

Yet a conversation with Helpmann soon assures one that he dislikes being pushed into the position of a "venerable" and far prefers to be judged, as a true professional on the strength or failure of his last performance.

"People in the theatre," he explained, "are doing a job just as they would be in an office, shop, or surgery. In 37 years on the stage I can honestly say that I have seen far more temperament outside the theatre than in it. Throwing things about and having tantrums is the prerogative of the untalented or the theatrical amateur. Thus, jealousies and intrigues in ballet companies usually begin on the far side of the footlights, when a section of the audience fastens on a personality—claps when that person makes an entrance and ignores or even boos other performers."

"In regard to ballet I would say that a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing. Who, other than a professional dancer can criticise technique, the exact execution of a particular step? For the public ballet should be entertainment—not some esoteric rite. It is also an art where illusion is a very precious commodity. Too much of the ballet writing of today is the work of journalists—a very different genre from the serious critic, whose views the dancer should respect. The former often intrude on the private lives of artists, quoting irrelevancies, of age, personal appearance and tastes as if they had real bearing on the subject. I myself, have no wish to see—for example, pictures of a famous ballerina frying sausages in her kitchen after a first night, even if the ballerina happens to be a personal friend of mine. I resent the perpetual desire of certain sections of the press to reduce the "star" to a kind of universal norm of the common man—"just like everybody else." If one had to make a choice between today's kind of publicity and the legendary but slightly mysterious grandeur that surrounded such people as Irving and Bernhardt, I would infinitely prefer the latter. Unfortunately I can suggest no way of reversing the trend. I think things have gone too far, but in the main I am a little unhappy about people who band themselves into groups to talk about the theatre. If such studio meetings and clubs can really encourage people to come to the theatre then I will wholeheartedly support them—but all too often such gatherings develop either into glorified fan clubs or hot-beds of shop-talk scandal."

Asked if he preferred dancing or acting, Mr. Helpmann replied that the question was an impossible one to answer. "It is the same as asking — do you like Shakespeare's comedies or tragedies, the answer is that one does not invalidate the other. I would say that in preparing for a rôle the approach is slightly different, the dance is more physical and the straight theatre, mental effort, yet both need the same core of hard work for success, the mastery of basic dance technique, or the learning of lines. I have noticed too that returning to ballet after a play I see new subtleties and shades of meaning emerging from the old familiar rôles. If I had my career over again I would certainly choose to intermingle dance and acting in the same way. In this respect I believe I was fortunate in first coming to England at a time when the then Vic Wells Ballet and the Old Vic were much more closely linked than they are today. I think it is essential, both that a dancer should learn to act and that an actor should learn to dance. For example an actor spends many years training his voice—he goes into a theatre and the first thing he is asked to do is put on a long robe with a train, a sword and move silently across the stage. Equally a dancer's training puts an emphasis on absolute perfection of line, and on his first day in the theatre he is asked to perform a rôle." In this context Mr. Helpmann added that in his opinion the size of the rôle was unimportant—the fourth coachman in *Petrouchka* was just as demanding a project to the true-dance actor as a much bigger characterisation. He said also, that Dame Ninette felt much as he did on this matter and that it was likely the dramatic side of the Royal Ballet syllabus would be extended in the near future.

Of all ballets, his own favourite was *Giselle*, because of its dramatic quality, and because "The Prince is so much more than the usual supporting rôle." Asked what he felt was the final conclusion of the the story, Helpmann said that he supposed Albrecht returned to his fiancée—but that the question had never troubled him—the ballet ended with the fall of the curtain. "After all," he said, "if we were supposed to know that surely someone would have created a sequel by now."

With regard to his own ballets, they had the linking factor of a strong story line because his own interest lay in the field of drama, but it was not necessary for all ballets to be of the same sort.

In the creation of *Hamlet*, he chose the dreamlike presentation of the tale—"because it would be a crazy undertaking to try to squeeze the whole of the play chronologically into the 14 minutes duration of the score."

"At the time of *Hamlet's* creation," he explained, "that particular Tchaikovsky score had only received about two public performances in England in fifty years and I found it wonderfully stimulating to work with a Tchaikovsky score that was not yet hackneyed with overplaying." When asked to compare the *Romeo and Juliet* of the Bolshoi Ballet with his own translation of Shakespeare into ballet, Helpmann said that while he admired the Russian work, he himself would not have attempted the choreography in that manner. As a general rule, he thought it was a bad policy to try to make a translation of a work from one medium to another. "It is," he remarked, "impossible to improve upon an established masterpiece—one can only comment on it and that was what I tried to do in *Hamlet*." "There is no set pattern about the subject matter I choose for my ballets. *Miracle in the Gorbals* I did because the story appealed to me, and *The Birds* was, of course, comic.

continued on page 16

CONSTABLE

Third Steps in Ballet

THALIA MARA

This book completes the trilogy begun by *Ballet: Home Practice for Beginners* (8s. 6d.) and *Second Steps in Ballet* (8s. 6d.), of which thousands of copies have been sold and which have received the approbation and support of ballet teachers all over the country. *Third Steps* deals with the basic Allegro steps—the elevation and connecting steps—of ballet, and explains them so lucidly and illustrates them so clearly that the students cannot fail to find the book anything but helpful.

Miss Mara stresses that these books do not replace the qualified teacher: but parents whose daughters are learning ballet will find these books invaluable in guiding their children in *correct* practice at home.

Illustrated 10s. 6d.

New Books

Reviewed by

PIGEON CROWLE

Third Steps in Ballet. By Thalia Mara. (*Constable*, 10*s.* 6*d.*)

This excellent little book is intended for the young student but its careful details of execution would also be of help to the more advanced. It completes a trilogy on home practice for beginners, and takes the student through the basic principles of elevation and connecting steps of ballet and, as before, the writer reminds her readers that the book is designed solely as a supplement to work in class. The illustrations by Louise Holmgren are good but I feel that the flowing shoulder-length hair should have been included in the "Don't do this" drawings.

Every fond ballet mother should read the foreword.

Margot Fonteyn. By Elizabeth Frank. (*Chatto & Windus*, 21*s.*)

Once upon a time ballerinas were depicted as fragile beings; surrounded by mink and admirers, they led a life exotic and apart. Nowadays, as a reaction to this picture of silken dalliance, they bite the dust of the classroom, bathed in sweat and an atmosphere of dreary self-sacrifice. Inwardly yearning for domestic duties and to boil an egg to perfection, they only dance because Mum said so. More recently, according to some writers, they now even implore Mrs. Worthington not to put her daughter into ballet. Though this sorry state of affairs must have leaked out by now, fortunately for those who find in ballet their favourite entertainment, the schools are still full and, concealing her distaste, the ballet girl continues to make her way from the corps to soloist rôles and, sometimes, to the ranks of the stars. Defying Mum, she could, one assumes, take a concentrated course in shorthand and typing and join the ranks of girls scurrying home from the office each evening to have a go at the boiled egg—but somehow she doesn't and, strangely enough, I even know a ballerina who thanks God her mother put her into ballet and saw that she practised hard when she was a child.

Therefore, it is refreshing to learn from this book that if there is anything guaranteed to make Fonteyn laugh, it is a suggestion that she is a "martyr" to her art, and that she is most cheerfully undomesticated. Miss Frank points out that no dancer of worth practises solely because he or she is ordered to, or regards the strict routine of their lives as involving personal hardship. Certain sacrifices have to be made, and self-discipline and hard work become the natural way of things, but these are necessary adjuncts in the absorbing and all-important pursuit of perfecting an art and bring their own rewards; while the pleasures and the parties are there as well and, in careers involved in so much travel, are often more varied than those enjoyed by the majority of people. In describing these two sides of a ballerina's life and following her career, a portrait is sketched of a personality that is intelligent and kind, modest and seemingly matter-of-fact.

The style is rather cosy but it is straight-forward, and mercifully free from those ponderous and embarrassing probings into trivial personal idiosyncrasies designed supposedly to "reveal" the facets of genius. If, in the final count, the essential quality of Fonteyn's greatness remains elusive, this has defeated other biographers as well, for of all the qualities that go to make an artist, this is the most difficult to define. The many illustrations are excellent. There are two wrong captions—plate 12 is from *Les Sirènes* and plate 16 from *Coppélia*.

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Colette Marchand

New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

SCHEHERAZADE

Of all the recordings that have been issued of this work, there are none in the same category as Beecham's latest magic on HMV. ALP1564. He sees it as one vast canvas on which every note, whether new or repeated, has its own individual significance, shaped with a delicacy, an understanding and a strength that is quite astounding. These days Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite and Fokine's ballet are inseparable and here is a disc that no ballet-goer should be without—or anyone else for that matter. The sleeve has a colour reproduction of Bakst's fabulous decor and Pigeon Crowle's excellent notes are graphic and most informative.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

This is another record, RCA. RB16063, where the orchestral colour has been brought out most vividly and often unexpectedly—compatible, nevertheless, with a smooth and very fine performance. Monteux is an old hand at ballet and elicits that grandeur of style so essential to the dancer in this type of ballet. The clear, clean recording makes a disc that I can recommend to anyone who wants well chosen excerpts on both sides of a twelve-incher.

CARNAVAL DE PESTH

Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* have often been choreographed and the sixth is common to both Ede Brada's ballet and Harald Lander's *Rhapsody* for the Royal Danish Ballet. No. 6, along with Nos. 2, 12 and 15, is played by György Cziffra, HMV. ALP1446, in a truly Lisztian style as his technique is quite formidable and he can handle both the brilliant and the lyrical passages with equal effect. Apart from the slightest hardness of tone, this is an outstanding record.

EVERYMAN

The *Cradle Song* of Richard Strauss' *Domestic Symphony* with parts of his tone poems was the basis on which Mona Inglesby built her masque and many of us will remember that able dancer-actor, Leslie French as Everyman. Reiner and the Chicago S.O., RCA. RB16054, give us a rich account of this work, paying careful attention to the composer's wishes and helped by clear recording. Possibly some may feel it a little too full-blooded.

CONCERTO ROMANTICO

This was first performed by the Slavenska-Franklin Ballet when Slavenska choreographed Liszt's *First Piano Concerto*, in an abstract classical style. The present well recorded disc, Decca LXT5330, is eminently efficient as one would expect from a soloist of Katchen's standing, with the L.P.O. and Argenta. However Liszt was a romantic and I feel that this aspect of the interpretation has not been considered to the full. On the reverse side is his *Second Concerto*.

SALADE

Salade was a ballet chanté by Massine produced in 1924 during his break with Diaghilev. Later the composer, Milhaud, arranged twelve of its items for piano and orchestra, calling them *Le Carnaval d'Aix*, for an American tour. It is light gay music which Grant Johannesen with the Philharmonia (Tzipine), HMV. CLP1149, throws off with plenty of verve. Coupled with a good Saint-Saens' *Fourth Piano Concerto*, this is a most enjoyable record. A worthy addition to any collection.

VARIATIONS

Moments Musicaux with other of Schubert's works formed the score of Lifar's ballet, which he devised for presenting the ballerinas of the Paris Opera, Decca LXT5413 couples it with Schumann's delightful *Waldscenen* but surprisingly Wilhelm Backhaus does not give either work the lightness of touch they need. Nevertheless it is music that can take a lot and still be attractive. So if you want this pair, hear them as the piano tone is good.

FACADE

Columbia's new issue of suites 1 and 2, 33C1054, has Walton himself conducting the Philharmonia and a very full, round recording it is. For good measure it includes his *Johannesburg Festival Overture*. Irving's disc, nevertheless, should not be forgotton—it may not be quite so well recorded though the difference is not great and he does get a more saucy touch into one or two of the numbers. However, I think that all in all the balance is in favour of Walton.

CARTE BLANCHE

Pye's series "The Composer Conducts" should prove interesting, as at comparatively small cost, you can sample contemporary music—particularly that of the younger composer. The present disc, CEM 36007, of John Addison conducting the Pro Arte Orchestra is of a suite from Walter Gore's ballet which he dedicated to the memory of Lilian Bayliss and was first performed at the 1953 Edinburgh Festival. The music is appropriately light and well fitting to various items from a circus.

THE ANGELS

Pye's little disc, CEM36003, gives us Arnell's own rendering of the Roundelay from Cranko's ballet, danced last winter at Covent Garden. It met with criticism but this excerpt is a pleasant momento.

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Maryon Lane and David Blair on their Wedding Day.

MARYON LANE

MARYON LANE was born in Melmoth, Zululand, and commenced dancing at a very early age. Her first teacher in Johannesburg was Pauline Stokes, and later she studied with Faith de Villiers and Reina Berman, the R.A.D. representative. Towards the end of the last war, a visiting Examiner from the R.A.D. arrived and Miss Berman persuaded Maryon to take the examinations. She passed with flying colours, winning the Adeline Genée Cup, and was offered a year's training in London. In 1946, accompanied by her mother, she arrived in England, and entered the Sadler's Wells School.

In the following year she had her chance in the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, where her piquant personality was quickly recognised and fruitfully exploited by the young choreographers Rodrigues, Cranko and Macmillan. She created many parts in Macmillan's early ballets, and although usually cast for semi-comedy rôles, serious drama appeals to her most. In Macmillan's *Noctambules* an outstanding chance came when she was given the part of the Hypnotist's Assistant.

Perhaps her greatest reward for the years of hard work came when she went back to her native land as a leading dancer, touring Rhodesia and S. Africa.

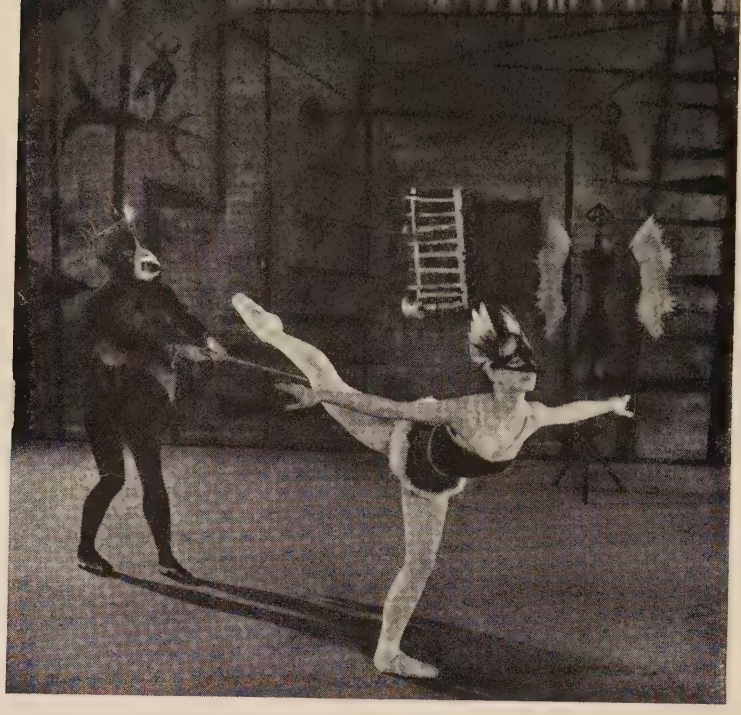
She has no special ambition outside ballet, which fills her life, but if she did cease to be a dancer she would like to take up acting. In 1957 she married David Blair and together they toured the United States and Canada dancing with the Royal Ballet in the Company's longest ever tour.

Maryon adores home life, and, in a life spent mainly in the public's eye, thinks it is important to get as much of it as possible.

. . . RÔLES DANCED . . .

Polka from	*Façade* (Ashton)
Mazurka in	*Les Sylphides* (Fokine)
Created the lead in	*Parures* (Anthony Burke)
The lead in	*Valse Nobles et Sentimentales* (Ashton)
Lead and pas de trois in	*Les Rendezvous* (Ashton)
Sugar Plum Fairy in	*Casse Noisette*
The Wife in	*Sea Change* (Cranko)
Columbine in	*Carnaval* (Fokine)
The betrayed girl in	*Rake's Progress* (de Valois)
Poll in	*Pineapple Poll* (Cranko)
Beauty in	*Beauty and the Beast* (Cranko)
Odette in Act II of	*Swan Lake*
Swanilda in	*Coppelia*
The Bride in	*Blood Wedding* (Rodrigues)
The lead in	*Iles des Sirènes* (Rodrigues)
Created the Urchin in	*Café des Sports* (Rodrigues)
Created Premonition in	*Somnambulism* (Macmillan)
Created the lead in	*Danses Concertantes* (Macmillan)
Created the Girl in	*House of Birds* (Macmillan)
Created the Hypnotist's Assistant	*Noctambules* (Macmillan)
Created the lead in	*Laiderette* (Macmillan)
Polka in	*Solitaire* (Macmillan)
The Ballerina in	*Petrouchka*
Young Girl in	*The Shadow* (Cranko)
Pas de deux in	*Giselle*
Chrysanthème in	*Madame Chrysanthème* (Ashton)
Ballerina in	*Birthday Offering* (Ashton)
Blue Girl in	*Les Patineurs* (Ashton)
Ballerina in	*Ballet Imperial* (Balanchine)

As the Sugar Plum Fairy in **Casse Noisette**
Photo: Maurice Seymour



1955 **The House of Birds**

Maryon Lane created the role of the girl turned into a bird and made captive by the Bird Woman (Doreen Tempest). The first performance of this Kenneth Macmillan ballet was at Sadler's Wells Theatre.
Photo: Denis de Marney

MARY

1954 **Café des Sports**

One of the roles in which Miss Lane will always be remembered is that of the urchin, which she created in Alfred Rodrigues' ballet at the Sadler's Wells Theatre.

1956 **Noctambules**

As the Hypnotist's Assistant, first performed at the Royal Opera House, London.
Photo: Houston Rogers

1951 **Pineapple Poll**

When first performed in March, Maryon Lane danced a minor role, later she took the lead. *Photo:* Denis de Marney

1953 **Carte Blanche**

In the Intermezzo with David Poole. This ballet was first produced at the Edinburgh Festival. *Photo:* Denis de Marney

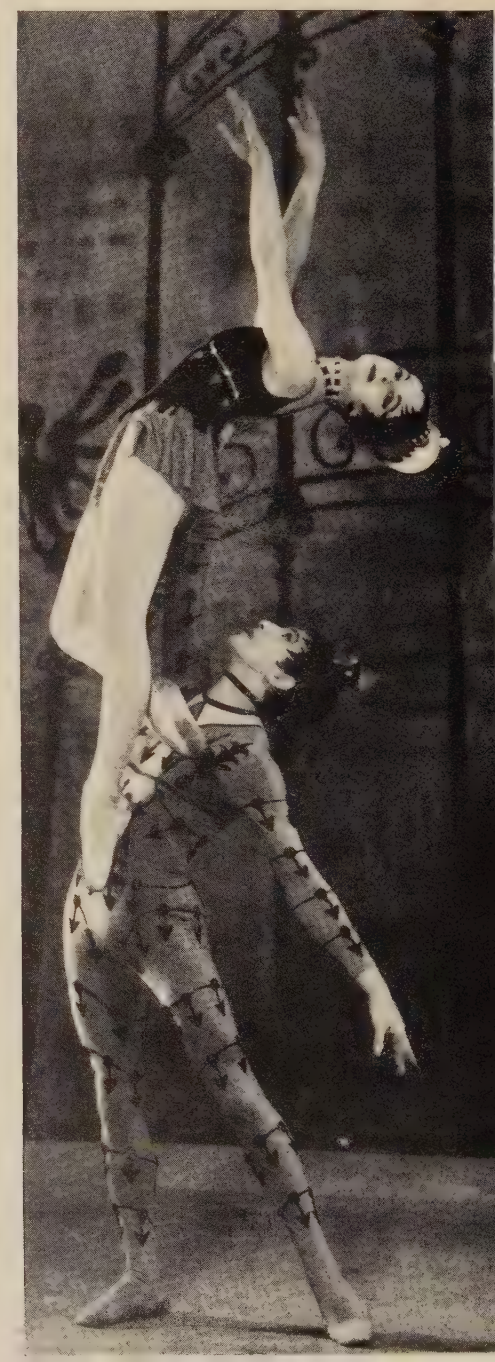
Danses Concertantes

Our photograph (bottom right) shows Maryon Lane and David Poole in Kenneth Macmillan's first work for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Maryon created the lead in this ballet, first performed in 1955. *Photo:* Denis de Marney

N LANE

1949 **Sea Change**

John Cranko's ballet was first performed at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin in July. Maryon Lane as the young wife (centre of picture) realises that her husband will never return. *Photo:* Baron



The Stranger: Deirdre O'Conaire as Ivana, Ivica Raunig as Vidan

THE SPLIT BALLET

Fifth Symphony: with choreography by Oskar Harmos, some of the soloists of the Company

A Visit to Split

With so much mediocre ballet in the world,
and so much wastage of talent,
it is always a delight to find a young
company maintaining the finest
balletic traditions

in this article

FERNAU HALL

tells the story of such a company, formed in a town with no traditions of ballet, but with such a solid sense of tradition that it challenges comparison in this respect even with the Bolshoi and the Royal Danish Ballet.

Ana Roje as Giselle (Act II). Anton Dolin produced this ballet for the Split Company. Photo: Vivienne.

THE clue to this paradox is to be found in the London of 1933, then the home of Nicolas Legat—the teacher of genius who did more than anyone to form the Russian school and so make possible the supreme achievements of twentieth-century ballet. Building on the solid foundation of the French and Italian schools, Legat inspired his Russian pupils to pour into ballet a new poetry, depth of feeling, subtlety of line and individuality: he worked with the utmost care and insight to develop their mind, imagination and taste as well as their bodies, treating each pupil differently.

At this time ballet training in Yugoslavia was provincial, and this caused Ana Roje most promising of the young Yugoslav ballerinas, to come to London for a few months' polishing at the hands of the world's greatest teacher. In fact she made such an impression on Legat that he persuaded her to stay at his side until his death four years later. She became not only his favourite pupil but his assistant, and he passed on to her the whole of his vast knowledge and experience. The result was that when he died this young ballerina found herself one of the most important and sought-after teachers in the world: she toured with both the leading cosmopolitan "Ballets-Russes" companies, giving lessons to famous dancers such as Massine, Danilova and Markova.

In London Ana Roje got to know Oskar Harmos, the first Yugoslav male ballet-dancer and an outstanding choreographer. In 1939 they married and returned to Yugoslavia where they began to build up a ballet tradition in Zagreb. They made a perfect team, for Oskar Harmos worked creatively on bold lines, while Ana Roje, took over to polish up the details. They suffered very much from isolation from the rest of the ballet world during and immediately after the war, and so in 1951 they returned to England to study the achievements of English ballet in the previous decade.

In 1953 they decided to start an international ballet school in Split (Yugoslavia), hoping in due course to start a ballet company there. Apart from being Ana Roje's birthplace, this lovely and ancient town on the Dalmation coast offered many advantages, including a good-sized State theatre with a long tradition of opera and drama. The fact that it had no tradition of ballet was an advantage, for it meant that they could establish everything on sound lines, and waste no time on the thankless task of eradicating bad traditions.

Events completely justified their plans, more quickly than they dared to hope. In fact local enthusiasm was so great that they were persuaded to start performances of ballet only six months after they reached Split. Using the best dancers in the International School and in the evening classes which they had started in Split, they began by staging small-scale ballets, and after two years they were presenting large-scale three-act ballets such as *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

I should have preferred to see the company during the long summer festival, when performances are given in the open air, under idyllic conditions, in such places as Diocletian's palace and the Mestrovic Villa. But it was also exciting to see the dancers in the Spring, with the promise of summer enchantment hinted at by the palm-trees in the garden of the school and the blue-green sparkle of the clear water of the bay. The dancers divided their time between the school (near the village of Kaste, Kambelovac) and the town of Split. I found them cramming themselves into a Chrysler and a Land-Rover for the journey round the bay, but in a few months they will have a new boat in which they can sail to work in luxury.

The company classes, taken by Ana Roje in a large bright studio near the theatre, were as fascinating as ballets. Each class was quite different, with its individual exercises freshly invented for the occasion—combining together to make a powerful impression of progressive development. Ana Roje played castanets to make clear exactly the tempo and rhythm she wanted; when necessary, she demonstrated with the easy grace and breadth of movement of a great ballerina. With her dark hair she looked almost Andalusian: like most Dalmatians, she represented a fusion of the many races which have occupied this coast since prehistoric times.

Dominating the front row of the class was Lidije Sotlar. This tall and statuesque beauty (a ballerina on a year's leave of absence from the State Theatre in Ljubljana) danced with heart-warming elegance and nobility; but sometimes she showed a zany sense of humour which peeped out oddly from behind that proud Slav profile.

Among the boys, Zelko Juresa stood out as a very rare example of the true danseur noble, the male equivalent of the classical ballerina, able to give even the simplest classical step the resonance of a poem. He leaped like a bird, without apparent effort: being fortunate enough to have had his whole training from Ana Roje, he has made outstanding progress in four years, and will be a great dancer when he has finished his training. He is lucky indeed to work in a company where the dancers get their teeth into exacting rôles and have every chance

Continued on next page

to come to maturity artistically as well as technically.

Of the recent ballets which I saw, *The Stranger* made the most vivid impression. This remarkable work by Oskar Harmos is based on an old Dalmation legend which is clearly related to the legends which inspired *The Firebird*. An old man (the Stranger) comes to a village which he finds living in terror of the plague, symbolised by the horrible Pomoritad (who brings death by knocking on people's doors). The heroic Vidan (following the advice of The Stranger) saves the village by going to a graveyard, where a snake crawls over him; he kisses the snake, which turns into the beautiful but sinister Hatma, and finally gives him a scarf with which he can destroy Pomoritad. This he does; but he is unable to prevent Pomoritad from killing his beloved Ivana. The latter rôle was created by the delightful young Irish ballerina, Deirdre O'Conaire, trained in England and Yugoslvia by Ana Roje; a few months ago Deirdre O'Conaire became a star of the Festival Ballet.

Another fascinating ballet was *Fifth Symphony*. Even when I watched it in rehearsal, without benefit of costumes or orchestra, it had such power that it made shivers run up my spine. Oskar Harmos had adapted the themes which Tchaikovsky used in composing his fifth symphony, following a precedent set by Massine in the ballet *Les Présages;* unlike Massine, however, Oskar Harmos had worked out a logical and consecutive story, showing all the characters in desperate revolt against the terrifying and implacable figure of Destiny. When this ballet was first produced in Zagreb in 1941, Yugoslavia was under German occupation; and the ballet aroused such passionate enthusiasm among the Zagreb spectators that Oskar Harmos and Ana Roje (who danced the rôle of Love) narrowly escaped being put into a concentration camp.

The class for small children was both fascinating and disturbing, for it upset all my ideas on the subject. I saw children of five standing at the barre and doing familiar ballet exercises with all the aplomb and control of fully-grown dancers: their feet (very well pointed) soared high in the air in grands battements, and they even managed an excellent 5th position. When they had finished the barre they performed a dance which included some quite difficult ballet steps, but throughout the dance they retained to the full all their spontaneity of feeling. Theoretically what I saw was impossible: ballet training is supposed to deform the plastic bodies of small children, and the effort to do standard steps is supposed to rob their dancing of its natural gaiety. When I asked Ana Roje about these classes, she amazed me by agreeing that it is dangerous to give ballet lessons to very small children. She went on to say that only if the teacher has great knowledge and adapts the training very carefully to the physique of each child, can this be done safely. But Nicolas Legat, working in London in the thirties with Ana Roje as his assistant, proved the value of such classes—one of the children attending them in London being Moira Shearer. As I watched Ana Roje's class, I suddenly realised what was familiar about the atmosphere in Split: in many ways it was very like that of London in the golden years of the thirties when English ballet developed so rapidly that anything seemed possible.

Ballet Today **has the widest foreign news coverage of any British dance magazine.**

AN EVENING OF BALLET

PRESENTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF BALLET CLUBS

IT seems that the Association of Ballet Clubs' Evening of Ballet is now established as an annual event and it will certainly be a very welcome one. The varied programme presented at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre on May 10th should be judged, rather than on its existing merits, in that it undoubtedly presages better things to come.

The Masque Theatre Club presented two items by Bridget Kelly Espinosa. This club is very fortunate in that the transport of decor (a major headache for the other participants) presented very little difficulty for them and in *Terpsichore* laurels should be handed straight away to Penelope Hoes for her excellent, even if unoriginal, designs. They are also very fortunate in having a fairly strong team of male dancers (yet another major problem for most clubs) and a youthful and immensely attractive corps de ballet. The latter was shown up to its fullest advantage in *Le Foyer de la Danse*, an interpretation of the painting by Degas. Few interpretations of well known masterpieces have managed to remain so faithful to the spirit of the original and yet so fresh in ideas. The club has made the very best of its unique resources in the fields of drama and dance. Nevertheless, as amateur standards get progressively higher it becomes increasingly difficult to overlook the dull thud with which every jeté terminated and the on-stage noises that volleyed and thundered like the Charge of the Light Brigade whenever anyone went up on points, as they did quite frequently in the second ballet.

Janet Cranmore from Birmingham, brought down *Reprisal*. I can think of other works in her repertoire which would have made a still better impression and I confess that I had very grave qualms about how her dancers would adapt themselves to the larger stage and the altogether different atmosphere from her own intimate little theatre at Edgbaston. They took it in their stride and, while some more adventurous costumes particularly for the bats would have greatly improved the whole work, I continue to think of this company as I always have: a fine advertisement for the Legat system.

Two clubs from Ireland presented works both based on Irish tradition. *The Children of Lir*, adapted by Madame Morosini Whelan and with choreography by Olga Mohan, erred on the side of simplicity but we are not familiar with Irish folklore and perhaps it was better this way than that it should be obscured by elaboration. But judged by its possibilities it does show that there is a veritable gold mine of material in Irish folklore just waiting to be put onto the stage. Madame Morosini Whelan tells me that they intend to enlarge upon this work after they have presented it at the Royal Irish Academy at the end of this month. Certainly it will be greatly improved by more actual dancing and more clearly defined time lags. To darken the stage to show the passage of time rather weakened the ballet and the passage of 900 years could perhaps be better expressed in dance. It is well worth enlarging upon.

Lack of clarity is also my main criticism of the Irish Ballet Society's *Kitty of Coleraine*. By the time we had realised what this delightfully presented work was about it was all over. I have repeatedly delivered trouncings to clubs who give male rôles to female dancers and here is another to add to them. Brenda Maloney as Barney—NO ! !.

If my comments on the Sheffield Ballet Club's *Ballet International* are rather harsh it is not that I wish to discourage them. It is bad luck on them that they have come up against a purist as far as national dances are concerned. The choreographer did not even give her name and most of the dances can be found in the R.A.D. syllabus anyway. The only thing Russian about the Russian dance was the costume and even that had got slightly confused with the sack line! It is quite clear that the anonymous choreographer has never been within 2,000 miles of Mexico and tambourines no more make Italian dancers than fine feathers make fine birds. The costumes for the Spanish dance were as near to Aragonese as they were to anything whilst the dance came quite near in places to Valencian.

This is quite as sacrilegious as it would be to put a Highland dancer in the costume of an Oxford Morrisman. Even the East was represented by two girls with unmistakably English complexions (*who* was responsible for the make-up ?) and the club would do well to check up on the differences between Balinese, Tibetan and Javanese dances for the mixture they produced was as incongruous as would be the Highland Fling and the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance rolled into one. If production groups are not prepared to make themselves familiar with their subjects then they should leave them alone.

DAVID BENN.

ROBERT HELPMANN—

continued from page 7

Have I any future theme in mind ? Yes several, but I think it might be unwise to discuss them now—and give other choreographers a chance to explore their possibilities before I do."

Earlier, when discussing the ballet *Hamlet*, Helpmann had expressed the view that teaching Shakespeare in schools was a bad thing. "Shakespeare," he said vehemently, "wrote for the theatre, he is meant to be acted, not picked and pecked to pieces and written about in the classroom. If children want to act, that is a different matter, but they should never be forced to study the plays. What child of eleven or twelve, for example, can possibly understand *Hamlet* ?" In view of this last statement I asked him at what age he thought children should start coming to the theatre. Here, he smiled and said that as a rule children disliked so-called children's plays, "I hated *Alice in Wonderland*," he recalled and that the fairy tale was seldom enjoyed properly until one was apparently too old for it. "However," he replied, "I first went to the theatre at the age of five . . . and I haven't been able to think about anything else since . . ."

Men in Ballet Series still available:

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Ballet Month—Coming Events

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

3rd June	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, Miracle in the Gorbals, Birthday Offering* (Fonteyn, Nerina, Jackson, Beriosova, Farron, Lane, Linden, Page, Grahame; Somes, Shaw, Grant, Chatfield, Blair, Doyle, Ashbridge, Hart)
5th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Solitaire* (Linden, Shaw, Lane, Trecu, Hynd), *Coppelia* (Park, Burne, Edwards, Grahame, V. Taylor)
6th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Ballet Imperial* (Lane, Trecu, Grahame, Burne, Newton), *Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes, Lane, Shaw, Jackson, Edwards)
7th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge, Park, Grahame, Trecu, B. Taylor)
7th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs* (Shaw, Park, Doyle, Jackson, Page), *Giselle* (Beriosova, Chatfield, Hill, Page, Trecu, Edwards)
11th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Birthday Offering, Petrushka* (Fonteyn, Nerina, Jackson, Beriosova, Linden, Blair, Page, Park; Somes, Shaw, Grant, Chatfield, Blair, Ashbridge, Clegg, Doyle, Ashton)
13th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield, Lane, Page, Shaw, B. Taylor, Grahame)
18th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes, Beriosova, Page, Clegg, Ashton)
21st ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Jackson, Chatfield, Linden, Sibley, Usher, Powell)
21st ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair, Linden, Jackson, Shaw, Powell)

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)
AT COVENT GARDEN

25th June	Wed.	(eve)	*Veneziana, Les Sylphides, The Burrow, Pineapple Poll* (Heaton, Alexander, Cox, Lee, Lakier, Sopwith, Blakeney; Buton, Boulton, Bennett, MacLeary, Miller, Mosaval)
27th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge, Cox, Boulton, Farriss, Lee, Alexander)
28th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*A Blue Rose, Bluebird Pas de deux, Le Lac des Cygnes Act II, Veneziana* (Heaton, Alexander, Cox, Lee, Farriss, Sopwith; Buton, Boulton, MacLeary, Miller, Mosaval)
3rd July	Thurs.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, The Burrow, A Blue Rose, Pineapple Poll.*

ON TOUR

W/c 7th July	*Opera House, Cheltenham (Cheltenham Festival)*

FESTIVAL BALLET FOREIGN TOUR

2nd–14th June	*Israel (celebration of the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel)*
17th–22nd June	*The Staatstheater, Zurich (Zurich Festival)*
24th–29th June	*Deutschestheater, Munich (800th Anniversary of the City of Munich)*
7th–8th July	*Théâtre Nationale de l'Opéra, Paris* (2 *perfs.* Nutcracker *in its entirety*)
11th–13th July	*Nervi International Dance Festival at Genoa*

FESTIVAL BALLET IN LONDON

16th July–13th Sept. *Festival Hall, London*

SUNDAY BALLET CLUB

8th June Sun. Wyndham's Theatre, London. 8 p.m. Ballets by Merial Evans, Norman Dixon, Gary Burne, Jacqueline Watcham, Robert de Warren, Faith Worth (new ballets from five of these six choreographers.)

HILDE HOLGER MODERN BALLET GROUP

9th-11th June Waterloo Park, Highgate, N.6.
12th-14th ,, Streatham Common (The Rookery), S.W.16.

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PAVLOVA EXHIBITION

Throughout the months of May and June an exhibition entitled ANNA PAVLOVA will be on show at the Church Farm House Museum, Hendon. Pavlova's connection with Hendon lasted for nearly twenty years for she made her home at Ivy House, Golders Green, now part of the Manor House Hospital. Amongst the exhibits will be the visitors book of the house, in which are recorded some of the names of the many distinguished people who came to visit the great ballerina, many items of her costumes, jewellery, fans, ballet shoes, the porcelain statuette modelled by Pavlova of herself dancing *Dragonfly*, her silver dressing set, programmes and photographs. On Friday, April 25th the Mayor of Hendon, Alderman S. E. Arridge, J.P. unveiled a plaque on the walls of Ivy House as a permanent memorial.

Entrance free. Exhibition open 10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m.—6 p.m. weekdays (except Tues. closing 1 p.m.). Sundays 2—6 p.m.

BALLET RAMBERT TO GO TO LEBANON

The Ballet Rambert are to be one of the major events of the famous Baalbeck International Festival in the Lebanon which will open on July 24th. Their programme will include *Les Sylphides, Gala Performance, Giselle, Winter Night* and *Coppelia.*

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

Twelve ballets specially commissioned for the Festival will be produced between August 25th and September 13th. Ballets are by Wendy Toye-Joseph Horovitz (title to be announced); Niels Bjorn Larsen (title and composer to be announced); Walter Gore-Schumann/Mackerras *Still She Wished for Company;* Georges Skibine-Maurice Jarre *Les Facheuses Rencontrés;* John Cranko-Schönberg *Pierrot Lunaire;* John Taras-Schubert *Octet;* Dimitri Parlic-(Composer to be announced) *Dreams;* Bjorn Holmgren Hugo Alfven *Midsummer's Vigil;* Margherita Wallman/Patrick Terry-John Gardner *Dress Rehearsal;* Andrée Howard-(Composer to be announced) *La Belle Dame Sans Merci;* Maurice Béjart-Marius Constant *Hunger;* Alan Carter-Frank Martin *Changement de Pieds.*

Dancers will include: Yvette Chauviré, Paula Hinton, Elsa Marianne von Rosen, Michèle Seigneuret, Kirsten Simone, Marjorie Tallchief, Natasha Trofimova, Maurice Béjart, Heino Hallhuber, Bjorn Holmgren, Henning Kronstam, Georges Skibine and Company including Claudie Algeranova, Yvonne Cartier, Sonya Hana, Mary Munro, Sara Neil, Gerard Ohn, David Poole.

FESTIVALS ABROAD

Holland: June 15th–July 15th
Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam
The Netherlands Ballet: Programmes will include:
Les Présages (Tchaikovsky-Massine)
Concerto (Bartok-van Dantzig)
American Ballet Theatre
Ballet of the National Theatre, Belgrade

BRUSSELS EXHIBITION WORLD FESTIVAL

*May 26th–June 1st	*Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Ballet)*
†May 27th–June 2nd	*Coros y Danzas* (120 *Spanish dancers and musicians*)
†June 6th–June 12th	*Mazowsze (from Warsaw)*
*June 22nd–July 13th	*Bolshoi Theatre Ballet of Moscow*
†July 1st–July 24th	*Changwe Yetu* (120 *dancers and musicians and singers recruited from all parts of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, even from the heart of the jungle*)
*July 22nd	*Netherlands Ballet*
†July 28th	*Antonio Ballet*
†Aug. 2nd–6th	*Ukrainian Song and Dance Ensemble—U.S.S.R.* (100 *performers*)
†Aug. 11th–Sept. 6th	*Moiseyev of Moscow (biggest of all Russian folk-dance ensembles*)
†Aug. 14th–15th	*U.S.S.R. Ensemble*
Aug. 18th–23rd	*Etorki Basque Ballet*
†Sept. 18th–23rd	*Hungarian Dance Group*

*Theatre Royal de la Monnaie. †Palais des Beaux-Arts.
Those not marked are not known at time of going to press.

STOCKHOLM FESTIVAL

June 1st–14th Festival of music, opera, ballet. Ballet programmes will include *Coppelia, The Sleeping Beauty, Gala Performance,* and three new ballets by Swedish choreographers.

News of Dancers Around the World

Left : Allegra Kent in *Stars and Stripes.*

HOPE SHERIDAN **From NEW YORK**

The Season (continued from last month)

On January 17th after many delays came Balanchine's fourth and last creation, *Stars and Stripes*. Sporting, gay, delightful vivandière costumes by Karinska, the girls all look as if they have been transported from a Perrot ballet of the 1850's. The boys are dressed in brilliant uniforms, American, of possibly the late nineteenth century. We would expect a plot à la *Daughter of the Regiment*, but, no, Mr. Balanchine had decided to abandon all talk, rely on illusion and bring on his dancers in "campaigns." The ballet in five campaigns is dedicated to the memory of Fiorella H. LaGuardia, one of New York City's great mayors. We must assume, however, that Balanchine whimsically dedicated the ballet to that part of memory which recalls LaGuardia enthusiastically reading the Sunday comics over the radio to the children of New York. The ballet is not patriotic, rather it bursts with humour and ebullience; sheer good spirits. The first campaign to the Sousa *Corcoran Cadets* is led by Allegra Kent and a squad of twelve ladies who execute some fancy on pointe manoeuvres with a music-hall flavour. The second campaign to Sousa's *Thunder and Gladiator* is captained by Robert Barnett and his twelve stalwart men.

They perform a series of dashing manoeuvres consisting of turns, beats and jumps—all at a heroic tempo, and quite bring the house down with their flashing finish. The third campaign, to *Rifle Regiment* found Diana Adams a trifle out of place at the head of another 12-girl squad and the point just a trifle coloured. However, with the opening of the fourth campaign to the popular *Liberty Bell* and *El Capitan*, Melissa Hayden and Jacques d'Amboise raise the ballet from pure music-hall to pure dance. It is the movement devoted to a long, extremely difficult pas de deux which draws from the two dancers the extremity of their virtuosity. d'Amboise is given almost every form of grande batterie which he performs with great verve and virility although technically one could expect much more from his entrechats. Melissa Hayden is given some hazardous unsupported adagio which she executes with such gratifying exactitude and steely strength. Together or singly these two provide moments of sheer pleasure for they have been given by Balanchine an admirable opportunity to practise their art. The fifth campaign to the *Stars and Stripes* brings all the companies and Old Glory on stage in a rousing finale. *Stars and Stripes* will probably last a few seasons, at least until it begins to pull at the seams and everyone discovers that except for the pas de deux there is really very little stuffing in it. However, it is a good programme closer and as such will serve the repertoire well.

GEORGE JACKSON **From CHICAGO**

With two of our big three ballet companies spending much of their time on foreign tours, the stay-at-home Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo despite its non-American name remains as *the* American company, at least from the audience point of view. New York City Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre dance for more citizens of other countries than of their own and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is important if for no other reason than that it presents the type of ballet most seen by Americans. The artistic aims of Sergei Denham, who determines the type, are praiseworthy. He is the only American ballet director seriously interested in maintaining the great ballets of the past in versions approximating the styles of the originals. Dancers in this company must adapt themselves to a variety of choreographies. Difficult, of course, and performances are not as perfect as those of New York City Ballet whose repertory is adapted to the native style of its dancers. In the commissioning of new ballets Denham has the courage to deviate from the here fashionable choreographers and while the results are often only curiosities, occasionally there is a genuinely beautiful and unusual ballet.

Such a policy which involves great artistic gambles should be supported by great financial resources, but unfortunately Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is managed on a strictly commercial basis, realising its artistic aims more imperfectly than the other big troupes which are operated with an expected deficit.

Tatiana Grantzeva and Yvette Chauviré were guest artists with the company during other engagements on the 1957-58 cross country tour. During the Chicago engagements the three regular female soloists assumed all of the ballerina rôles and were considerably overworked. Of the three only Irina Borowska, formerly first dancer at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, is of ballerina status. Borowska is excellently matched with premier danseur George Zoritch and in Massine's *Gaîté Parisienne* and in the third act of Petipa's *Raymonda* they recaptured the passionate elegance of the days when Danilova and Franklin were the company's stars.

Nina Novak, formerly of the Warsaw Ballet, came to the United States as a very young dancer before the second World War and joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo shortly thereafter. At her best in demi-caractère ballets such as Sergueff's version of *Coppélia*, Antonia Cobos' *The Mute Wife* or Boris Romanoff's *Harlequinade* she might also have made an acceptable classical dancer but there seems to be no one to guide her. Her frequent partner, Alan Howard, boasts some flashy footwork and very bad mannerisms.

Tall, pale, third soloist Gertrude Tyven is an exacting but not very exciting technician whose flat stage personality is unsuited to most rôles. The weakness in the upper ranks caused the newspaper critics to be very severe with the company. Actually the group of lesser soloists and Michel Katcharoff's corps de ballet were quite respectable. Performances seemed better rehearsed than in past years although there were too many slight ballets on some programmes.

Two new ballets are in the repertory. In *Variations Classiques* the benign pomposity of Brahms' Handel variations is reflected in Nina Novak's academic choreography. Although this is Novak's first attempt at making a ballet, no excuses for amateurishness need be made. No excuses for great originality need be made either, for *Variations Classiques* bears a marked resemblance to Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*, but Novak's is not the worst ballet of the type. The company danced very well in this work, tailor-made for its talents, particularly when Borowska and Tyven assumed the two ballerina rôles. They were partnered respectively by Howard and Kenneth Gillespie and supported by a corps de ballet of twelve. Against a plain backdrop, Karinska's costumes were not her most inspired.

The other première was *The Mazurka* by Leon Danielian, formerly a soloist with the company and now a guest artist with the San Francisco Ballet. Danielian's first ballet, *Sombreros*, was staged by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo last year. Its style was too slick and its dance content too brief for Ivan Boutnikoff's suite of Mexican folk tunes. Into his new ballet Danielian crowds too many dance ideas and combines them very amateurishly. To music arranged from Tchaikowsky, Chopin and Strauss, four couples in handsome white ballroom attire by Rouben Ter-Arutunian mazurka around the stage. A woman dressed in red (Borowska) enters. She attracts all the men and shocks all the women but soon is abandoned. She dances a melodramatic solo. A gentleman dressed in black (Eugene Slavin) appears. They dance a complicated, clumsy adage. Then the gentleman has his solo. The other couples reappear and the solo couple

George Volk, Diane Mansart and Horst Krause in *Othello*. *Photo :* S. Enkelmann.

Pilar Lopez. *Photo :* Roman.

joins them in a final mazurka. Is the woman in red a fallen damsel? Is the gentleman in black her rescuing knight, a figment of her imagination or the figure of death? Who cares since the dramatics are corny and the dancing cluttered?

Nina Novak's brother Edmund Novak, who has just joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo after many years with the Warsaw Ballet in Poland, caused controversy as Dr. Coppelius. Some thought his interpretation of the rôle awful and others thought it the very best they had ever seen.

Preceding the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's April 7th to 13th season at the Civic Opera House, Chicago had enthusiastically attended performances by pantomimist Marcel Marceau and the Yemenite dance group called Inbal at smaller theatres.

PILAR LLORENS **From BARCELONA**

At the Teatro Comedia in Barcelona something very rare in Spain has occurred. A private organiser gave us the opportunity of enjoying a season of combined Spanish and Ballet Dancing. And what a season indeed! The name of that admirable person, who once more deserves the title of Queen of Spanish Stages, is Pilar Lopez. Pilar was expected here with impatience after her debut in Madrid, where Alicia Markova joined her Company as Guest Artist.

On the opening night in Barcelona there were many well known personalities at the theatre, prepared either to approve or to criticise her work, so to have all these people standing at the end of the performance shouting "bravo" is not an easy task. It was not an easy audience, it was well informed and knew well the subject, and expected a lot from Pilar and her company because they have always given us the best. Once more we thank her for bringing us an exhibition of truly Spanish art, not a commercial show of some kind of folklore for tourists. And who can say better than a Spanish audience what is authentic?

Among the most interesting numbers we found her solo *La boda de Luis Alonso*. This will be remembered for the simple way in which she dances it, where every little movement is full of tradition and emotion. I want to point out two outstanding dancers in the Company: Antonio Gades and Alberto Portillo. Unluckily Gades is not now with the company as he has been called for military service. We specially remember his *Danza Castellana* and *Jota*, both a test for the versatility of a dancer. He has been with Pilar ever since he started dancing and we hope she will make him another of her famous male partners.

We might call Alberto Portillo a "bolero" dancer for it is in this speciality that he excels. As a dancer with a good basis of ballet training he can give to his bolero dances all the elegance, harmony and finish that the style requires. It would be better if nobody attempted that line without a correct ballet training. Before joining the company, Portillo was dancing with the Ximenez-Vargas troupe, and for almost a year since he has been working with Pilar. When Gades left he took over some of his rôles and was dancing them very well indeed.

The main item of the programme was Pilar's creation of combining Spanish Dancing and Debussy music. True it is inspired by Spain, but on hearing the music and watching the dancing one believes it to be a miracle of fusion of two different things. It is a succession of five dances each one with a completely different character. I would choose *Tocata* and *Soirée dans Grenade* as the best. The last one *Jardins sous la Pluie* could very well be cut out. The costumes were very cleverly designed by Manolo Muntñaola, and the pianist Eleanor Fine who accompanied the dancers deserves much praise.

We are told that in order to get the dancers acquainted with the music, during the five weeks before they ever tried to put a step to it, it was played through the loudspeaker for an hour every evening while they made-up. It was in Dublin that she started to choreograph it. On the second week of her stay, Pilar Lopez brought two guest artists from France: Jean Babilée and Claire Sombert, They danced a pas de deux arranged by Babilée, in the first part and the ballet *Le jeune homme et la mort* in the second. They had a great success, especially Babilée who was seen here for the first time, and people commented: "he is not like any of the others, he is someone to be remembered by himself." And that is the highest praise in a country where personality counts so much in art.

On the third week we saw Paula Hinton and partner. I must say that her dancing was faultless, and showed great elegance in the pas de deux, but the rest was not sufficiently interesting, she wore a beautiful tu-tu, but the costumes were too simple. Her miming was extremely good. On the fourth week, Mariemma was guest artist. It was a long time since we saw her in Barcelona. She danced four numbers, three were regional dances, and also Polo de Bretón. It was a very good idea to dance the "sardana" accompanied by "Cobla Barcelona" a group of typical musicians. During the Mariemma performances, Pilar renewed her programme, including *Pepita Jimenez* and *la Caña* two of her well-known dances. The Pilar Lopez season ended on the 2nd of April. In Barcelona she engaged a new pianist, Maria Rosa Caminals. Also two dancers, Antonio Monllor and Julia Gallego.

Pilar opened a Madrid season at the Teatro de la Zarzuela, on the 22nd of April.

J. R. FARRINGTON **From MONTE CARLO**

After the Ballets de Pâques, reported in our last issue, the Easter Season here continued with a one-night performance by the Spanish dancer Mariemma and Raphael de Cordova, with Enrique Luzuriaga, pianist, de Malaga, flamenco singer and Paco de la Isla, guitarist. Mariemma, who is undoubtedly a great dancer of the Spanish School, was responsible for the choreography of thirteen of the sixteen solos and pas de deux on the programme. She was ably supported by de Cordova, a young dancer of strong and clean technique.

To conclude the Easter Season Eugène Grunberg brought the Hanover Opera Ballet from Germany. This company of fifty dancers, the majority of German nationality, has not previously danced outside its home city and it must have been quite an ordeal for the young dancers to make their foreign début in Monte Carlo and so shortly after the appearance of such famous stars as Fonteyn and Chauviré. The Hanover Opera Ballet is integrated with the Hanover Opera, the dancers performing in the ballets incorporated in the operas and in one or two programmes per week of Ballet. The development of Ballet in Germany is actively encouraged by both State and Government subsidies, these enabling Hanover to undertake an ambitious programme of training and presentation. Much is owed to the directrice de ballet, Yvonne Georgi. This very experienced and talented woman was responsible for the choreography of the six ballets presented here. She has a flair for combining the classic with modernism and her work shows dignity and dramatic sense. Rudolf Schulz undertook all the costumes and decors. He has a nice sense of colour and pleasing simplicity of line. Wolfgang Trommer conducted the Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra. The stage of the Salle Garnier proved somewhat small for the company, this being largely overcome by the excellent disclipine of the corps de ballet.

On the opening night, before the Prince and Princess of Monaco, the dancers were obviously nervous, the dancing being somewhat rigid and unconvincing. *Bacchus and Ariane*, a two-act ballet by Albert Hermant to music by Roussel, was followed by the ultra-modern *Ballet Electronique*. The "music," by Henk Badings, is a series of sounds obtained from various forms of electrical apparatus, including tones unobtainable from normal instrumentation, registered on sound bands at the Philips Works at Eindhoven. These are diffused from two magnetophones, one for the stage and the other serving loud-speakers in the auditorium. The conflict between these two sources of sound is the subject of the ballet. From the very adequate programme notes I had expected violent modernism to the accompaniment of noisy discord. Actually the ballet is not displeasing. The theme is developed by four dancers, Diane Mansart, Gisela Rochow, Eleanor Laubscher and Georg Volk, dancing with eight trios. The music cannot be described in normal terms, varying from the weird shrieks of an old radio and the gurgling of water in an airlocked pipe to tones so high that they became inaudible to my ears. Whether there is a future before this form of dance accompaniment must remain to be seen.

The first evening closed with *Le Loup*, the well-known ballet by Anouilh and Neveux to music by Dutilleux. The dancing was now more confident, Horst Krause as the Wolf being outstanding.

The second programme opened with *Othello*, a ballet in eight tableaux and seven ritournelles by Erika Hanka to music by Boris Blacher. This elaborate but nicely designed ballet, with many minor changes of decor, well portrayed the famous tragedy and we saw some good dancing. Georg Volk was a convincing Othello and Gisela Rochow a dramatically pathetic Desdemona. A satisfying and well produced ballet. *Les Quatre Tempéraments*, to music by Paul Hindemith, is a simple ballet expressing four human moods—melancholy, optimism, unconcern and anger. A wider variation in costume would have been an improvement. *Les Variations Humaines*, to music by Morton Gould, is a modern ballet opening with two men rolling a dice and expresses the subordination of humans to destiny. Schulz's costumes here were colourful and attractive, the decor being simple and effective. Ursula Rieck and Ralph Briegk excelled in a pas de deux and the company danced with admirable brio.

It is always interesting to see a ballet company for the first time, particularly when one has formed no preconceived notions. The Hanover Ballet gave me great pleasure and Eugène Grunberg's judgment in producing this young company here was amply justified. Madame Georgi informed me that the company is unlikely to be able to accept many touring engagements owing to its commitments with the Hanover Opera. This is much to be regretted, for the experience to be gained would be invaluable.

WILFRIED HOFMANN **From STUTTGART**

Stuttgart, Germany, is known to everyone for the Mercedes automobiles built there. Evidently it is not by accident that this industry has grown in this part of Germany, the Swabians prove to be the most diligent and laborious of all—keeping their minds on their work all day long. Art—especially dancing—to the Swabians does not seem an efficient nor a quite holy enterprise. No wonder no single trace of Noverre's important Stuttgart days can be unearthed. The ballet of the Wurttembergische Staatstheater (the State institution) had led an unimportant and underemployed existence under the military leadership of a ballet master who drilled the corps de ballet noisily like Prussian infantry and who obviously was preoccupied with the male wing. Not so anymore! Here comes Nicholas Beriosoff, and with him a whole bunch of foreign dancers and a new page of Stuttgart history. The German starlets, of course, dislike to be replaced, and (under Gunter Eggert) reacted in forming a group of cool jazz dancing of their own. But, there is no doubt, the foreign invasion set a new artistic standard: Nathali Kelepowska, Metropolitan Opera, as ballet mistress; Xenia Palley, American born ballerina of Russian descent, as première danseuse; Dulce Anaya, alternating with Palley; Donald Barcley, Sadler's Wells trained; Hugo Delavalle from Argentine, and Esteban Cerda from Chile. Beriosoff—we all thought it would serve him right if he failed!—started out with a trivial little ballet such as—*Sleeping Beauty*! and since the December première sold out about 24 performances! This unpredicted success is due to the astonishing job the company, numbering only some 36 dancers does, though technically it still has some way to go. The success also is accounted for by the enormous demand for the classics in Germany where the public has to make up for such a long period of experimenting. Here the classics are enthusiastically received as a miraculous realisation of a world akin to the German romantic mind but hardly anymore dreamed of. How else can it be explained that some of a young group of ballet-addicts have wept over every single one of those 24 performances? The Stuttgart *Sleeping Beauty* excels in its delicate blue and pink decor (decor in Germany usually is of a high standard!) which at the end of Act I seems to grow hedges for years on end, and for Dulce Anaya's Aurora. Dulce (formerly Wohner) is a precious revelation. She is small in stature like Maria Fris, with a baby-ballerina-like quality, soft like Violette Verdy, and lyrical —oh, how lyrical! When in her variations in Act I and the Vision Scene she "travels" over the stage she seems to be conducting the orchestra through her movements. How else could it be possible that she was so unbelievably well in accord with the music? As long as Dulce is on stage you are prompted to ask what substance the other dancers are made of, since Dulce is human. Leaving Stuttgart I envied the Stuttgarters, hating them for not applauding enough, and endangered the street traffic through my absent-mindedness. On the male side only Delavalle—a demi-caractère demon of a dancer with great aplomb (as Blue Bird) dancing his partner off stage—from the point of view of personality could counteract this ballerina. Beriosoff is on the right track. He needs a school, and he needs to change the Swabians into enthusiasts if he wants to keep his soloists who in spite of sold-out theatres are underfed as far as spontaneous popular appreciation is concerned. Already *Les Sylphides*, *Don Quixote*, *Pas de Deux*, *Bruch Concerto* (with Beriosoff choreography) and *Prince Igor* are being taken into the repertoire. And since Beriosoff played his greatest asset—Svetlana—I am going to apply for a Stuttgart citizenship (Svetlana Beriosova danced Aurora on May 13th and 15th).

JANET SINCLAIR **from ROTTERDAM**

On the 5th of April the Dutch dance world was deeply shocked to hear of the death, after a short illness, of the Rotterdam teacher and choreographer Netty van der Valk. Perhaps the most vivid figure in the rather sluggish artistic life of Rotterdam, she had built up a flourishing school since 1934, and from 1951-1954 directed her own company, the Rotterdamse Ballet Ensemble. Perhaps the most notable thing about Netty was her boundless enthusiasm—at our last meeting, a few days before she was taken ill, she told me that she had reorganised a week of her busy life so as to be able to attend seven performances of the Bolshoi *Giselle* film in seven days; and, as a student of hers said, she had so much vitality and vigour when at work, either teaching or arranging choreography, that we all expected her to go on till she was eighty. She was fifty-one when she died, and something like a thousand people followed her coffin on the coldest, bitterest April morning I can remember.

Dutch dance circles were further thrown into consternation by the sudden announcement that the entire Netherlands Opera Ballet—thirty-four dancers—had been dismissed and a complete reconstruction of the situation was in hand. So far nothing has been announced about future developments.

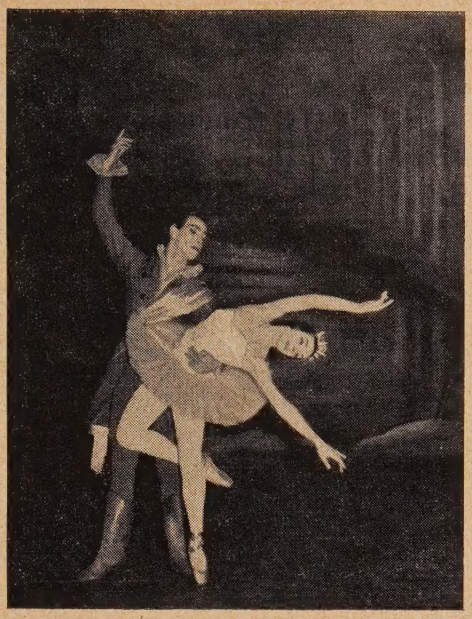
The Ballet der Lage Landen, who also announced themselves to be in severe financial difficulties, have produced a *Les Sylphides*, mounted by Michael Holmes who has studied the ballet with Karsavina, which won golden opinions from every critic and deservedly so. What a pleasure it is to see this ballet come up fresh once again as the masterpiece of the twentieth century! This renaissance is undoubtedly due, to a large extent, to the attention paid to the music, which is played almost "straight" without any of the tiresome and sentimental "rits" and "ralls" to which we have become so accustomed. The company can boast of two good Waltz dancers (a minor miracle in itself) in Milly Emmer and Lieke de Leeuw, a promising if not yet fully realised Mazurka from Ine Rietstap: Ben de Rochemont makes a brave attempt at the male rôle, though, like most interpreters of the part today, he lacks sufficient elevation: and there are two first-rate Preludes, Clazina Nepveu (for my taste a little too cool and cleancut) and Andrine de Clerq, best of all the soloists and of the entire company the only one whom one can describe as a "born *Sylphides* dancer." The corps de ballet acquitted themselves so well that one was never conscious of individuals.

Lucas Hoving is at work on ballets for both the Lage Landen and the Scapino Ballet companies.

The Netherlands Ballet recently added *De Toverwinkel* with choreography by Leonide Massine to their repertoire. This work bears a superficial resemblance to a ballet which I remember well, called *La Boutique Fantasque*—the music is the same. It would be untrue to say that no member of the cast seemed to have the faintest idea of what Massine must have been driving at, for Thom de Jongh as the shopkeeper's assistant had a very good idea indeed; though the frantic "doubling" necessary to attempt to give this work in any vague semblance of authenticity caused him to be superseded for the finale by a girl, wearing the same costume but different make-up. Apart from the slight consolation offered by this one performance, however, I would put on record that never in my life have I seen a good ballet so slaughtered and I prefer to try and forget all about it as quickly as possible. What a pity that such a master choreographer as Massine should sanction and indeed produce such a massacre of his own work.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD . . . . . STUTTGART . . . . . ROTTERDAM

Around the World



Dulce Anaya and Esteban Cerda in the Vision Scene of *The Sleeping Beauty*. *Photo :* Alberto Vega

Michèle Seigneuret and Maurice Béjart in *La Symphonie Pour un Homme Seul*. *Photo :* Kiehl

ROBERT PATERSON **from VENICE**

On the 12th and 13th April Le Ballet Théâtre de Paris (directed by Béjart and Pimental) gave two performances at the Fenice Opera House. Despite the inclement weather a fair audience was present and on both occasions received the French dancers with enthusiasm.

Excepting the first work the first part of the programme was decidedly expressionistic, forceful and modern. Expressionism is well suited to the marked individuality of these dancers, and Maurice Béjart, who choreographed all the ballets, must be warmly congratulated on creating mood and movement perfectly suited to the personality of each soloist. The ballets given were as follows:—

Chapeaux. Music by Aaron Copland. Costumes by Leon Grieg. This consisted of a romp on the beach with a young girl endeavouring to reach for a hat from a row of them hanging above her. Her companions tease her by getting the hats, at first for her, but then keeping them for themselves. All very gay, and not a bad opening number. What chiefly attracted me was the dancing of a youth by the name of Patrick Belda. Provided he doesn't grow any taller, he should develop into a fine dancer. He reminded me of Peter Van Dijk when, at about the same age, he was beginning his career in Berlin. Aaron Copland's music was noisily orchestrated, and there was far too much banging on the bass-drum.

Concerto (pas de deux). Music by Darius Milhaud. Costumes by Bernard Daydé. This pas de deux demonstrated a number of esoteric movements of undoubted originality, and which presumably had some meaning. But what was the meaning? Maurice Béjart has obviously given a lot of thought to his choreography—particularly the clever hand and arm movements; so it is a pity that the work falls between two stools. It is not a mere divertissement depending solely on beauty of line and movement; on the other hand it is not possible (without a programme note) to read any theme into it. The result is that it rouses our interest only to baffle us. Perhaps that was the intention. Nicole Raes moved beautifully and brought a feeling of drama to her part, but Jean Blanchard was undistinguished and scarcely changed his expression.

L'Etranger. Devised and choreographed by Maurice Béjart. Music by Villa Lobos. Decors and costumes by Bernard Daydé.

A hot country; the men and the girl are bored and frustrated; they would give anything for a change. A stranger arrives; he is fresh, full of life and passion. The girl falls for him, and he for her. But their moment of bliss is short lived. He departs. And the girl, defying all, breaks the bars of the cage (of her existence) and runs after him.

Here at any rate is a theme, the portrayal of which grips one more each time one sees it. At first the surrealist decors composed of odd looking Venetian blinds, telegraph poles, a huge cobweb, etc. seems merely an attempt to express something new at all costs. Then, gradually, the impression of absurdity dies; somehow one feels the heat, and withal the realisation that this decor is symbolic of captivity, that it represents in fact a sort of cage. And from that moment the work becomes terribly alive, and we realise how cleverly and carefully it has been worked out.

The haunting music of Villa Lobos, derived probably from folk sources fits the choreography to perfection. It is mainly for guitar lightly accompanied, but often the music stops, the rhythm being continued only by the dancers' tapping feet or their hands against the floor. When the guitar recommences fresh action is speedily forthcoming. This makes for effective contrast, of which the dancers take full advantage.

As the girl, Tania Bari expresses well the alternation between languor and despair on the one hand, and the hope of love and freedom on the other. She is completely sure of herself, the difficult technique never being allowed to show. The tricky rhythms demand an absolutely perfect timing, and this both Bari and Cano display instantly and always.

Antonio Cano as the stranger commands the stage the moment he appears. Helped by his handsome appearance and strong personality his movements, both of feet and arms, possess an authority not often seen in male dancers.

Bernard Daydé's costumes call for no comment except that I did not like the sash that Bari wore. She is surpassingly lovely to look at, but this sash broadens the hips and could be dispensed with. I have seen a photo of her without it and am at a loss to know why she wore it on this occasion.

Symphonie Pour un Homme Seul. Music (concrète) by Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer. Decors, none; a few ropes hang from the flies to the ground.

A free translation of the programme-note reads: "How reply to the noise of the crowd? With violins, with oboes? We renounce the tone of the violincellos—too weak for the man of today, for his epic struggle for the anguish common to all . . . We renounce, too, all the other paraphernalia of the stage: the modern ballet dancer works without scenery, without costume, maybe without drum or trumpet. To the rhythm of his heart alone he moves; and if he is sincere, so much the better will his dance be."

Maurice Béjart has here devised and choreographed an undoubted masterpiece of its kind. The theme is simple—a man's daily fight for his individuality in these post-war years, but the treatment is exceedingly complex. To the rhythmic accompaniment of suggestions of the daily noise that surrounds us (this in itself a masterstroke of ingenuity) Béjart has composed a rapidly moving drama showing the man moderately contented at the beginning, but gradually overcome by the pace of the race for existence, and by his complete disillusion in the search for love. He escapes finally from the crowd up a rope; on his way to Heaven, it is to be hoped !

Béjart has made this rôle completely his own. For sheer force of personality, ingenuity in foot and arm movements (that just avoid acrobatics) he must be practically without a rival. Certainly in this particular rôle nobody else could hope to approach him. His stamina is well nigh incredible.

And the same goes for Michèle Seigneuret as the woman in his life. For neatness and speed, suppleness and command of every shade of expression I don't think I have ever seen anyone to compare with her. She must be one of the finest character dancers of the day. But there

is more to it even than that, for, owing to her slim boyish figure (clad in tight fitting black) she often seems inhuman—the essence of puckishness, or, at static moments, she coils herself suggesting the gliding of a snake. Again, the way she twists Béjart to his knees, then mounts and rides him (a variation on developpé en devant) is quite unforgettable. At such times a dynamic fury seems to possess her, shattering in its intensity.

I have little space to write of *Pulcinella* (Stravinsky) which concluded the programme. At first it seemed to fall decidedly flat after the amazing ballet preceding it, but little by little the old charm asserted itself, and the work proceeded with artistry and considerable gusto. Again Béjart and Seigneuret added to their laurels in portraying the rôles of Pulcinella and his son. They are masked of course, at the beginning, but even so it was impossible to believe that the part of the son was being played by a woman, so exactly did Seigneuret walk and posture like Béjart. Later, when they discard their masks and the son masquerades as a woman, Seigneuret accomplished seven hops on pointe on one foot going backwards, and finished with an unsupported arabesque on pointe !

The scenery and costumes (the latter very pretty) were again by Daydé; and the three singers, who acquitted themselves well, were Clara Betner, Ezio de Giorgi and Mario Pardini. The orchestra of the Fenice, conducted by Daniel Stirn, accompanied the first and last ballet with distinction. The remaining music was recorded.

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FERDINAND REYNA from PARIS

DE CUEVAS BALLET

The season by the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, finished one might say in triumph on April 20th. The company was in very good form now it has been freed of many useless elements which did not do it any good. *Diagramme* (to Bach's Sixth Brandenburg Concerto, choreography by Janine Charrat) was danced with skill by Jacqueline Moreau, Vasil Tupin, Georges Goviloff, P. Salem and Léo Guerard. *La Lampara* (by the choreographer and maître de ballet of La Scala, Milan, Ugo dell'Ara, music by F. Donatoni) was surprising for the emptiness and puerility of its conception. The theme which closely resembles that of *Noces Fantastiques*, a Lifar ballet at the Opéra, did not inspire the Italian choreographer. Only the personality and artistry of Nina Vyroubova and Serge Golovine saved the ballet. There was the same lack of interest in *Othello* (choreography by Françoise Adret, music by Michel Damase, decors and costumes by Wakhewitch) which did not reveal any personality in the choreographer. The principal dancers were Rosella Hightower and Nicholas Polajenko. *Duetto* a new pas-de-deux for Golovine and Vyroubova to the Liszt variations based on the quartet from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, with choreography by Serge Lifar was not out of the ordinary. The Rose Adagio from *The Sleeping Beauty* was a triumph for Rosella Hightower. *Giselle* was danced in turn by Rosella Hightower and Nicholas Polajenko and by Nina Vyroubova and Serge Golovine. The latter were the most successful. Without going into details of the season's programme, it can be concluded that the corps de ballet of the de Cuevas company won admiration not only for its discipline which would not be saying a great deal, but still more because it is vital and alive and one is conscious of its presence throughout the performance. Serge Golovine displayed a dramatic ability which he does not seem to have shown before, in *La Lampara*, *L'Amour et son Destin* and *Giselle*. The presence of Nina Vyroubova undoubtedly adds a great deal to the brilliance of the company.

SKIBINE'S CONCERTO

Critics and public alike were unanimous in acclaiming *Concerto*, a ballet by Georges Skibine, presented at the Opéra Comique to the concerto for piano and orchestra by André Jolivet, decors and costumes by A. Delfau. This score which was attacked at its first performance later obtained a resounding success. The composer has expressed himself in the most audacious and modern manner within a classical form. There is no theme to this ballet but the choreographer has freely treated the idea of the struggle between love and desire. Marjorie Tallchief, Georges Skibine, Michel Rayne and all the corps de ballet danced this work remarkably well.

FESTIVAL BALLET TRIUMPH

I must also report the triumph of Anton Dolin's London Festival Ballet at the Théâtre des Nations from April 17th to 27th. Claude Baignières, the critic, wrote in *Figaro* as follows on Markova's *Giselle* at the Théâtre des Nations: "she dances the first act with an exclusively interior intensity which deprives the scene a little of its mad romantic fever, but she crosses the stage like a cloud blown by the wind at the beginning of the second scene. Her échappées and arabesques which are of an incomparable lightness make of her *Giselle* that vaporous, dreamy Wili that Théophile Gautier intended. It is not her temperament to be a young peasant girl in love, but Markova is a regal soul inspired by the dance."

The Witch, Boy a ballet in three scenes to music by L. Salzedo, choreography by Jack Carter, decors and costumes by Norman MacDowell was danced by John Gilpin, Anita Landa and Kenneth Sudell and had a favourable press and held the public interest all the time. In this sombre, dramatic story, John Gilpin was sober, effective, restrained and at the same time expressive.

Variations for Four had a very warm reception. The choreography is by Anton Dolin, music by Margarete Keogh, costumes by Tom Lingwood and the dancers were John Gilpin, Louis Godfrey, Michael Hogan and André Prokovsky. This piece for the men is an original work with virile movement which does not lack grace. The choreographer avoided the temptation to indulge in acrobatics and his variations were a friendly competition. The four dancers together with the choreographer were given a great reception.

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by

MARJORY HALLAM

AN ARTICLE OF INTEREST TO TEACHERS OF BALLET

A pianist for practice classes at a school of ballet must have three qualifications for the job:

(a) A perfect sense of rhythm.

(b) The ability to tackle at sight a medium-hard version of all types of music, from classical to pop.

(c) A backbone of iron to support him or her through long sessions at the keyboard.

Recent conversations I have had on this subject point to the fact that the number of pianists willing or able to play for children's dancing lessons, is getting smaller. There are plenty of people who "play a little, dear" and plenty who "go in for it seriously." But there are few who set out to be useful, run-of-the-mill accompanists. Higher pay might help, but a little practise on the right lines by someone who would like to earn money by their skill, would assure teachers of value for their money.

I have recently been hauled out of retirement to fill a gap in a school of dancing in the Midlands and, after years of experience, feel I can give one or two helpful suggestions. Teachers, you might show this article to some housewife friend whose skill has not gone too rusty, or to her offspring, fresh from music-lessons. Either might be glad to earn pin-money.

1. Always keep STRICT TIME. Forget the delicate nuances of the Party Piece. Make your light and shade in depth of tone only. Sing "La-la-la" as you practise, buy a metronome or get some long-suffering friend to clap for you.

2. Play rhythmically for interest, or you might as well be hitting an oil-can with a stick. Whatever the number of beats in a bar, play the *first* beat a little louder than the others: *e.g.* for a waltz-time, play "*Rum*-tum-tum, *Rum*-tum-tum."

3. Practise different speeds for varying effects. An exercise may need four beats in a bar, but an ordinary quick march might not do at all. Make pencil notes on your music, to remind yourself, and pay attention to the teacher's voice saying "And-er one, And-er two." Leave time for those "And-ers." They are the rhythm of the exercise.

4. Sight-read everything you can lay your hands on. Do not be dismayed by the formidable chords of the left hand. Practise picking out the melody and a few essential chords and keep the tempo going full strength all the time. Notice at first glance the key, the number of beats in a bar, and any helpful remarks on top of the first bar, *e.g.* andante, allegro etc. Lastly, put your fingers on the keyboard and start, don't tremble on the brink. So are good sight-readers made.

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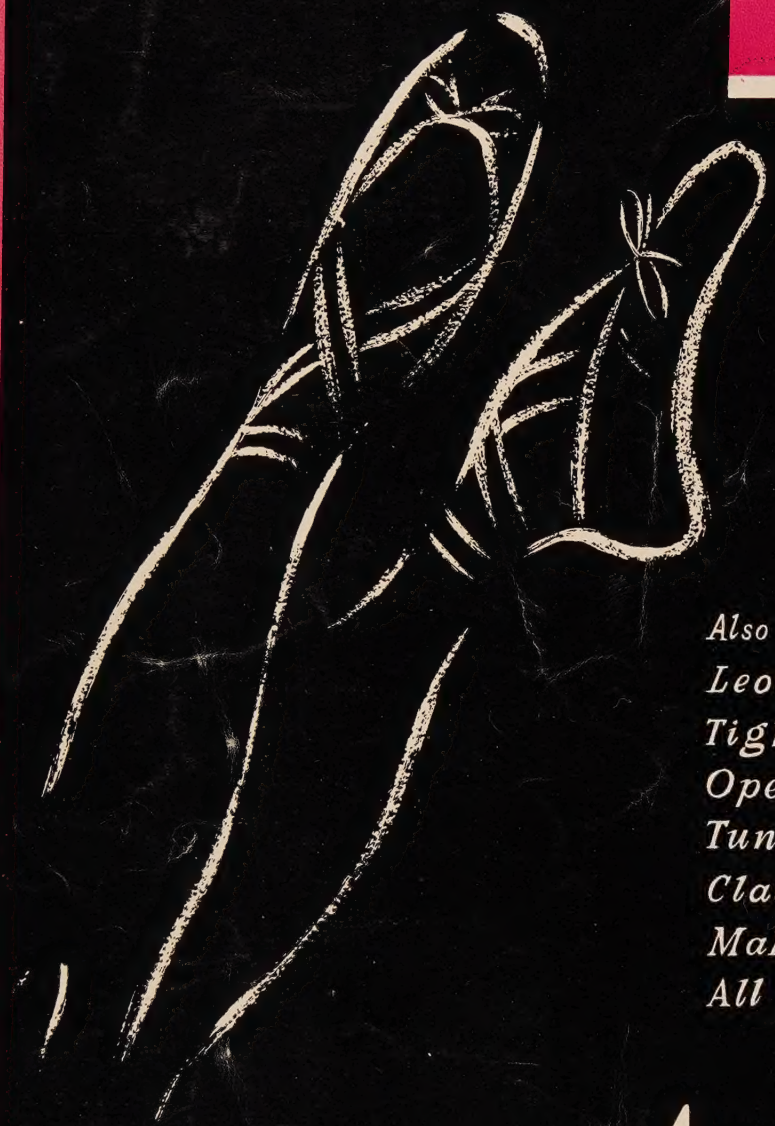

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